

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 08422 271628Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3132

S E C R E T GENEVA 8422

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FROM WISNER FOR SCHAUFELLE

1. I MET WITH REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE AT HIS HOTEL AT 8:00 A.M.
OCT 27. TWO OF HIS AIDES WERE PRESENT FOR MOST OF THE MEETING.
SITHOLE BECAME NOTICEABLY MORE RELAXED AND FRANK AFTER THEY LEFT.
THE MEETING WAS BUSINESSLIKE.

2. SITHOLE STATED THAT HE COULD NOT PREDICT HOW THE CONFERENCE
WOULD DEVELOP BECAUSE THE AFRICANS AND SMITH WERE DIAMETRICALLY
OPPOSED. THE AFRICANS' POSITION DEMANDED A TOTAL TRANSFER OF EF-
FECTIVE POWER DURING, AND NOT AFTER, THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. AN
INTERIM GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PARITY WOULD PRODUCE
A SERIES OF DEADLOCKS WHICH WOULD DELAY OR PREVENT MAJORITY RULE.
HE NOTED THAT "WE'VE BEEN IN TRANSITION FOR 86 YEARS" AND POINTED
TO A CHISSANO-MODEL 12 MONTH TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AS A MORE DESIR-
ABLE SOLUTION.

3. TWO PORTFOLIOS: SITHOLE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SECU-
RITY PORTFOLIOS IN HIS DISCUSSION OF "EFFECTIVE POWER". ANY SET-
TLEMENT ARRIVED AT IN GENEVA WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE PORTFOLIOS TO
REMAIN IN SMITH'S HANDS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE FIGHTING
FORCES. THE IDEA THAT THE SECURITY MINISTRIES BE PLACED IN HANDS
OF NON-RHODESIAN FRONT WHITES, WHILE WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION, WOULD
HAVE TO BE DISCARDED AS "POLITICALLY OUTRAGEOUS", SUCH ARE THE
EMOTIONS OF HIS ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE.

4. ACCORDING TO SITHOLE, THOSE WHO ACCEPT SMITH'S NEGOTIATING
POSITION ARE MAKING THE FATAL MISTAKE OF PRESUMING THAT SMITH IS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 GENEVA 08422 271628Z

CAPABLE OF PRESIDING OVER HIS OWN POLITICAL LIQUIDATION. SMITH AS

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE WOULD BE TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND SITHOLE WOULD TREAT THIS POSSIBILITY AS BELOW CONTEMPT.

5. ARMED STRUGGLE: SITHOLE DWELLED AT LENGTH ON THE EFFICACY OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE. HE DENIED THAT HE WAS BLOODTHIRSTY, AS THE WHITE RHODESIANS HAVE OFTEN CHARGED. HE ASCRIBED, HOWEVER, TO THE CONCEPT OF "REDEMPTIVE BLOODSHED" IN WHICH ONE MUST FIGHT TO RESTORE LOST RIGHTS. HE ARGUED THAT THE ARMED STRUGGLE HAD FORCED SMITH TO CHANGE HIS THINKING AND SO DRAMATIZED THE SOUTHERN AGRICAN SCENE AS TO PROMPT THE U.S. INITIATIVE.

6. AS THIS WAS FIRST OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE HAD TO TALK WITH SITHOLE I EXPLAINED AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH THE IDEAS WHICH MOTIVATED OUR INITIATIVE. I NOTED THAT WE HAVE ACTED AS A CATALYST TO FIND A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE PARTIES COULD COME TOGETHER TO NEGOTIATE. I EXPLAINED OUR BELIEF THAT IT WAS BETTER TO HAVE SMITH AGREE TO SPECIFIC POINTS, RATHER THAN GENERALITIES, EVEN THOUGH THESE POINTS WOULD BE OPEN FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION. I STRESSED OUR THINKING ON THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CONFERENCE AND OUR DESIRE FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BASED ON A SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE, INCLUDING THE WHITES WHOM SMITH MUST BRING ALONG. I STRESSED, IN MAKING MY INSTRUCTED POINTS, THAT WE BELIEVED THE PURPOSE OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS TO FORM A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE INTRODUCTION OF ANY OTHER SUBJECTS WOULD UPSET THE CONFERENCE AND WOULD BE UNREALISTIC.

7. SITHOLE SEEMED TO APPRECIATE PARTICULARLY MY EXPLANATION OF WHY WE HAD FORCED SMITH TO COMMIT HIMSELF IN DETAIL. HE AGREED THAT HAD THERE ONLY BEEN A GENERAL COMMITMENT TO MAJORITY RULE AND A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE NO PROGRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

8. SITHOLE ACCEPTED MY POINTS, AND ASSERTED THAT HE WANTS TO SEE NO MORE VIOLENCE. HE REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT SMITH MUST NOW BE MADE TO SEE THE LIGHT. IF NOT, THE FIGHTING WILL CONTINUE AND WHATEVER FUND OF GOODWILL THAT NOW EXISTS IN RHODESIA BETWEEN THE RACES WILL DISSIPATE. IN THIS REGARD, HE NOTED THAT ZANU WAS NOT ANTI-WHITE, BUT RATHER NON-RACIALISTIC IN ITS PHILOSOPHY. THE WHITES IN ZIMBABWE, HE ASSERTED, "HAVE AS MUCH CLAIM TO LIVE THERE AS I DO."

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 GENEVA 08422 271628Z

9. WHEN I MET PRIVATELY WITH SITHOLE, WITHOUT HIS COLLEAGUES PRESENT, HE BECAME MORE RELAXED. HE TOLD ME OF HIS APPRECIATION FOR OUR INITIATIVE AND THE SECRETARY'S CONTRIBUTION AND NOTED HIS ADMIRATION FOR THE U.S., WHERE HE LIVED FOR THREE YEARS AND WHERE HIS FIVE CHILDREN AND THREE GRANDCHILDREN STUDIED. HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS A SUCCESS. TO THIS END HAD DETERMINED THAT HE WOULD ENGAGE IN NEITHER A BOYCOTT NOR A WALKOUT AT

THE CONFERENCE AND HAS TOLD HIS DELEGATION SO. IF ANYONE WALKS
OUT IT WILL BE SMITH, HE SAID.CATTO

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